

KEEP THE MOMENTUM GOING

The traditional way to end a book is to provide a summary of what was presented and to draw the process to an end. But here success is the process, and success has no end. It is much more descriptive to think of success as a continuum, and you are now at a point on that continuum.

Hopefully, you have followed the advice of the book and have raised your career to new levels, and you are now at an advanced point on the continuum.

At the outset of the book, I said: “Project management is a dynamic discipline, and you really need to stay on top of it. New ideas, new software, and new approaches are being developed every day.” Your task is to keep the momentum going and to continually move all the factors now in your possession along the continuum.

This is the place in your career where you can apply your skills not only to your job, but also to other activities and continue your success. Your new and well-earned reputation will be the spear point that leads the way.

You are now at a point where you can give back more than your labor. You can contribute to the organization of which you are a part.

You can contribute to the discipline in which you operate. You can contribute to the community in which you live.

Continue your success by availing yourself of the latest ideas in every discipline applicable to project management. History, psychology, mathematics, and social studies are all applicable. Indeed, what is not applicable?

Applying Your Skills to Other Activities

As your project management career progresses, you will become more and more valuable to yourself and to your company. It is to your advantage and to the advantage of your company to share your skills with others and to lead other tasks within the company. This readily becomes a positively reinforced process. By being more valuable to the company, you are more valuable to yourself, and so on.

You are in a position now to add breadth and depth to the knowledge base for project management used in your company and perhaps the organizations to which you belong. Searching for new ideas applicable to project management is high on the list of how you can apply your knowledge and expertise. The application of your project management skills may be in mentoring less experienced project managers. Mentoring is also applicable to others who are not project managers, such as administrative people and technical people. Many projects need administrators knowledgeable in project management techniques, while other projects need technical people knowledgeable in project management techniques. It will be your pleasure to apprise them of these techniques.

At this level, you can be the architect for developing a project management office (PMO) within your company, you can be the catalyst for new ideas for managing projects using the standards now available through your participation in project management organizations, and you can chair project activities within your company.

Now is the time to share what you have gained—to give back some of what you have learned.

Gathering Leading-Edge Ideas

As you progressed through the skill sets, I'm sure you saw that the subjects were not only getting deeper, they were getting broader as well. At this point, breadth and depth are infinite.

There are many experts in project management who are advancing the field. But there are also experts in other fields, such as mathematics, psychology, and sociology, who have ideas that are applicable to our field. There are good ideas in places we never dreamed that could contribute to our discipline. Now, you have the visibility that can make far-reaching contributions to project management in your company and perhaps in other places as well.

At this point, it is imperative that you keep up with what's going on around you. Your attention should be drawn to reading such books as *Rethinking the Future* by Rowan Gibson, Alvin Toffler, and Heidi Toffler and *The Strategy-Focused Organization* by Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton. You should attend such seminars as *Developing and Executing a Customer-Centric Strategy* and question the application of Knowledge Management to what's going on in your organization. By all means these are not the only areas you should investigate; these are presented here just to give some idea of the kinds of directions your interests may take at this point.

At the outset of this book and many times later, I said that project management is an evolving discipline. It is not today what it was yesterday, and it will not be tomorrow what it is today. The evolution comes from leading-edge ideas. At first, these ideas are "soft"; that is, they are conceptual. As they grow and evolve, however, they become more "firm."

Mentoring and Training

To be called upon, either by management or by another project manager, to be a mentor means that you are considered expert enough to train others. It means that your abilities are well-respected and valuable.

Mentoring, believe it or not, is a two-way street—that is, you get as much from mentoring as your students do. You get to formalize and solidify your knowledge and experience. You will discover things you didn't even know you knew. You will find things you knew but had forgotten the details of and needed to research to bring yourself back up to speed.

You will gain knowledge from your students. They will be thinking from another frame of reference and bringing experiences and knowledge to the meetings that are new to you. Likely they will be younger than you. By being younger, they will have a different view of things. If you listen, as well as talk, you will learn something.

Policies, Processes, Plans, and Procedures

Now it is your turn to change and update the policies, processes, plans, and procedures you've been griping about for the last number of years. Two things will come to the fore here. First, you will probably find that many of the policies, processes, and so on were not so bad after all, now that you understand them from a senior management viewpoint. Second, you will have an opportunity to fine-tune them with the knowledge and the experience base you have created for yourself over the last few years.

A Project Management Office?

Does your organization have a project management office? Does it need one? Does the one it has need changing? Now, as a senior project manager, you will have the opportunity to be heard on the subject. You may want to tackle the book *The Advanced Project Management Office* by Parvis Rad and Ginger Levin and apply some of the appropriate tricks the author talks about. Some of the best program-oriented companies in the world use the PMO concept. The concept keeps IBM on the straight and narrow, and it helped Federal Express turn around.

If you don't want or can't afford a PMO office, how about a project management executive committee; an ad hoc group specializing in best practices of project management and flowing these ideas through the organization? The group can have a yearly conclave with an inspirational speaker to rev up the troops and send them on their way for the next year. A panel can present the findings of their research. Awards and recognition can be given at the annual meeting. The meeting will follow the same format as a marketing and sales meeting. To do the job we have to do, we need to be pumped too. We need to be inspired and need to take away new ideas from the conclave. And, probably most important of all, we need to meet new project and program managers; get to know their capabilities and personalities, and see their awards; and see what it takes to make it to the top in this company and in project management as a whole.

Suggested Reading

Gibson, Rowan (ed.), Alvin Toffler, and Heidi Toffler. *Rethinking the Future: Rethinking Business, Principles, Competition, Control & Complexity, Leadership, Markets, and the World*. New York: Nicholas Brealey, 1999.

Kaplan, Robert S., and David P. Norton. *The Strategy-Focused Organization*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2001.

Rad, Parvis, and Ginger Levin. *The Advanced Project Management Office*. New York: CRC Press, 2002.

Seminars

Developing and Executing a Customer-Centric Strategy

See: <http://www.amanet.org/seminars/cmd2/2585.htm>